

I am here today to support SB311. For many years I have worked with individuals through the church I attend who are disabled and/or low income. I have witnessed the struggles that individuals in these circumstances face and know how difficult it is for them to pay the ever escalating electric bills.

During 2005 and 2006 I worked as a Disability Program Navigator through a US Department of Labor and Social Security Administration grant. One of my responsibilities in this position was to assist people with disabilities become as self-sufficient as possible through employment. Again, one of the major hurdles for them to overcome was the electric bill.

Programs do exist that help the low income and disadvantaged with their bills. These programs are typically under funded and cannot meet all of the needs. Providing additional funds for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) through legislation will provide relief. However, the ability of power providers to purchase the lowest energy available from reliable sources, regardless of where the power generator is located, will provide long term help and reduce demands on assistance programs.

I encourage a do pass vote on this bill, and I would also like you to consider amendments that will allow Montana providers to compete in a low cost market situation. These might include tax credits when the lowest price is matched, or other incentives for providing additional assistance to individuals and families in need.

Thank you for your time.



Bill Snoddy  
Helena, MT

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